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HISTORY OF THE SABBATH.*

This latin tract of 108 pages treats of the origin of the Sabbatic institution, with special reference to the new light derived from Assyrian inscriptions, of which the author is master. Incidentally the theories of Wellhausen and "the Higher Criticism" receive condemnation from the Euphrates valley. The stones cry out in honor of the much abused Scriptures of the Old Testament. The following summary of the book is made by the author.

1. The principal signification of the word Sabbath is "quiet."
2. The Old Testament does not say plainly that the week and the Sabbath were used before Moses.
3. Other ancient peoples besides the Israelites and Babylonians did not observe sabbaths or reckon by seven days, except in astrology.
4. Our week arose from the combination of the Hebrew and astrological seven days.
5. Fortuitously the Jewish Sabbath and the astrologer's day of Saturn were the same.
6. The Hebrew Sabbaths were not in principle days of Saturn.
- 7 and 8. The astrological week was invented by the Babylonians but used, not by the public, but only by astrologers.
9. The Babylonians commonly used a week that originated by the fourfold division of the lunar month.
10. Their Sabbaths occurred the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of each month.
11. The Sabbaths were not evil days, not at all sad, but rest was severely enjoined.
12. The Sabbaths did not pertain principally to the worship of the moon.
13. Six was the principal number of measures in Babylon, so that in six days labor was full and a day of quiet must follow.
14. The Israelites received the Sabbath from the Babylonians, Moses accommodating it to the religion of Jehovah.
15. From the days of Moses each seventh day was a Sabbath.
16. From the historical and prophetic books it appears that from the time of Moses the Sabbath was regarded as a day in which it was wrong to transact business of any kind, and that in the time of Amos the intermission of business was not more negligent [as Wellhausen says] but more diligent than in the time of Nehemiah.
17. All writers of the pentateuch demand the intermission of all kinds of labor on the Sabbath.
18. It cannot be proved that the laws of the Elohist (P) book commanded sabbatic rest any more severely than other laws.
19. Sabbath rest is considered by the prophets and the writers of the laws as of all things most sacred.
20. The cause of Sabbath rest is always chiefly this that the Sabbath as sacred to Jehovah is profaned by the labor of man.
21. They did not consider that the prescribed rest was a sequence of the sanctity of the Sabbath as of other feast days, but that the Sabbath from the beginning was made sacred that it might be a day of rest.

* *Quaestiones de Historia Sabbati. Scripsit Guillelmus Lotz, Lipsiae, 1883.*

22. God did not set apart the day chiefly for the sake of slaves and beasts but that it might be celebrated with homage to God.

23. But it was not a mere ordinance. It was a benefit also.

24. The reason for the sabbatic rest given in the decalogue makes the sabbatic rest signify both an ordinance and a benefit.

25 and 26. The writer of Deuteronomy makes the reason for sabbatic rest both an ordinance and a benefit. He probably knew the reason given in the decalogue but omitted it to make room for another.

27 and 28. "Liber sanctitatis" predicates rest on the sanctity of the day to Jehovah.

29. There is no occasion for us to suppose that Ezechiel was the first to lay down this reason for sabbatic rest.

30. Even if Ezechiel had invented that reason it could not be contended that the nature of the Sabbath was different in his day from what it had been.

31. Exod. xxxi., 16-17 are later than Exod. xx., 11 and were inserted into the "librum sanctitatis" before it was received into the "librum elohisticum" (A. PC.).

32. Even if the writer of A. PC. had been the first to give this reason for sabbatic rest it does not follow that he thought differently from earlier writers concerning the nature of sabbatic rest.

W. W. EVARTS, Jr.

THE TALMUD AGAIN.

The hue and cry against the Jews has brought forth a considerable literature. In this a peculiar place must be given to the work entitled "An Opinion on the Talmud of the Hebrews."* It was written in the year 1802 and not intended for publication but for the information of a personal friend. The author Karl Fischer was censor of the press for the department of Hebrew, was a thorough Hebrew scholar, a devout Christian and a strongly upright man—these particulars are taken from the brief introduction to the present work.

The work itself begins with a statement as to the wide variety of opinions expressed concerning the Talmud; wherefore the author thinks there is room for one more. He does not propose to go at length into the history of the work, but simply describes its form, then passes to the great controversy of the fifteenth century between the monks and Reuchlin. This is related at considerable length. The opinion of Christian scholars is quoted—Fabricius, Wagenseil, Buxtorf, Lightfoot and others with a reference to the literature of the subject.

The author next gives a number of Talmudic passages which resemble sayings of Christ or of the Apostles. He considers the charge that the Talmud carries on a polemic against Christians and shows that at least in a majority of instances the charge is false. He gives at length (with a translation) the disclaimer of the Austrian Jews published in 1767 in view of such an accusation. One might think this protest composed with a special view to the slanders of Rohling. A second charge (that the Talmud makes it lawful for the Jews to cheat and rob the Christians) is considered at some length and refuted from Jewish sources.

* *Gutmeinung ueber den Talmud der Hebraeer*. Verfasst von KARL FISCHER, k. k. Zensor, Revisor und Translator im hebraeischen Fach zu Prag. (Nach einem Manuscript vom Jahre 1802.) Wien, 1883. (VII and 112 pages 8vo.)